



# Al-Risala 1991

December

## The Contradiction Must End

"I was strangely moved ...."

As I stood on a mountainside far away from the city, lush green trees spread their branches all around me and the chirping of birds rang in my ears. Different kinds of animals could be seen foaming here and there. I was strangely moved by this sight. How great and perfect that God must be. I thought, who made such a vast and beautiful world, and who then made every thing and every living creature in it function strictly according to His laws.

How beautiful and innocent is this world. Here the birds sing. only those tunes which their master has taught them; the cat and the goat eat only those foods which were appointed for them at birth; the trees sprout and grow exactly according to the way ordained by the Almighty ever since the world came into being; the river follows the same course laid down for it for all eternity. This universe of God is a perfect collection and all things in it act, without any deviation, exactly according to the norms set out for them.

But man is in an entirely' different category. His lips utter such words as have been forbidden by God. He derives sustenance from things which God has strictly prohibited. He chooses those pathways in life where his Master has clearly posted the sign: "No thoroughfare". Man is a very tiny part of God's vast universe, yet he goes against its laws, reveling in the perversion of God's world, instead of trying to preserve and reform it.

This amounts to creating a contradiction in God's non-contradictory world. This is to cause disharmony where there should be nothing but harmony. It is like causing a blemish to appear on a beautiful picture, like introducing imperfection into a perfect world, like allowing Satan to pollute a heavenly atmosphere with his evil.

The power of God and His desire for perfection which are in evidence everywhere and at all times in the universe, refute the supposition that this state of affairs (i.e. the perversion produced by man) will continue. God's power will certainly not give man the licence to perpetrate such a crime. It is against God's sublime conception of beauty and perfection to bear with such conduct.

The coming of the day when this contradiction will end is an absolute certainty. May God's will be done in this human world as it is done in the rest of the universe.

## Natural Scenes

On a visit to London, a certain Mr. U.K. Maukhapadhyaye once met an elderly Englishman who had served as an officer in the Royal Air Force in India 50 years before, during the time of the British Raj. Greatly interested to meet someone from India, he inquired of Mr. Maukhapadhyaye as to how India was progressing and recalled with great nostalgia the train ride between Bombay and Poona which he really used to enjoy, for it had provided him with a regular panorama of rivers, jungles and other scenes of great natural beauty. He expressed a wish to revisit India, so that he could enjoy those scenes once again.

In the course of the conversation, Mr. Maukhapadhyaye told him that Poona was no longer as he had just described it. Now known as Pune, the city had a tenfold increase in its population, and the new streets, high-rise buildings and lighting all around had given the place a mechanical rather than a natural look. Hearing this, the Englishman's interest rapidly waned, "No, I don't think I'll go back to India. India probably no longer exists." (TOI, February 3, 1984)

Industrial scenes remind one of man, while natural scenes remind one of God. The former bring one into contact with man, while the latter lead one straight to God. This is why man does not find such solace in industrial scenes as he does in natural settings. Human hearts will surely find peace only in the remembrance of God.

What are natural scenes? They are scenes which mirror divine attributes. The vast expanse of the heavens is an introduction to God's limitless being. When the sun rises, it announces, at it were, the Almighty being an embodiment of light. The river as it mends its way through mountains and plains, suggests the never-ending flow of God's mercy. The fragrance and beauty of the flowers are reminders of God's beauty from afar. If one has a discerning eye, one will find God's glory reflected in myriad scenes of nature.

## What Matters Is The Man The Optimal Strategy

During a visit abroad in September 1989, I happened to meet some Arab youths amongst whom there was a young man from Algeria. Initially he had been influenced by the Ikhwan movement, and then he had read some of my writings. He said that he agreed with what I had to say, but that he had not been able to understand what my practical programme was supposed to be.

My reply to this was that my programme was to prepare people who could make programmes.

Now is certainly the time for the revival of Islam. There is a pressing need for its resurrection. Hundreds of leaders have, indeed, been inspired by the spirit of revivalism and have earned exceptional fame through their efforts towards this end, but, ultimately, what have they achieved? I would say, next to nothing. The reason for their failure is that each one of them started out with a practical programme, the implementation of which was like trying to harvest the fruit before the tree is even planted.

The revival of Islam is a very serious, very long – term affair and is not to be achieved by mere rhetoric. The foremost requirement for such work is men of intelligence, who can chart out their own programme: who can adopt their own plans to the prevailing conditions. Unless people of this calibre come forward, any talk of a practical programme, or practical steps, will ring hollow. There are many people who cannot distinguish between real work and mere show. The latter, of course, is an exercise in futility, and will bring no results.

What really matters is the man. It is, therefore, essential to train and indoctrinate people who will be capable of undertaking real work. The revival of Islam is no ordinary task which can be achieved by just blindly following any routine programme. We need high calibre intellect, inspired reasoning, out-and-out dedication. We need people who can not only make programmes, but who can arrive at correct decisions in the light of difficult and changing circumstances, and then adopt the optimal strategy for the realization of their goals.

## Islam: Creator of the Modern Age Numerals

The present system of numerals was first invented in India. That was in an age, however, when all that was traditionally established had come to be regarded as holy, while all that was invented was considered suspect. As such, this method of writing numerals could not become widely known, and continued for a long time to remain hidden in privately owned books. The new invention did not, therefore, gain currency, for people clung to the old method, considering it to be holy.

Having learnt that in the recently established Baghdad empire great appreciation was shown for new inventions, an Indian traveller went in 771 to Baghdad, which was then under the rule of the Abbasid caliph, Al-Mansur. The Indian Pandit introduced into Baghdad a treatise on astronomy, a *siddhanta* (the Arabs called it *Sind hind*) and a treatise on mathematics. By order of Al-Mansur these books were translated into Arabic by Muhammad ibn-Ibrahim al-Fazari, between 796 and 806. The famous Arab mathematician, Al-Khwarizmi (780-850) went through this translation into which the digit zero had been introduced. He found that with the nine Indian figures 1-9, and the zero sign, any number could be written. Calling these the 'Indian' numeral, Al-Khwarizmi pronounced them the most satisfactory, and advocated their general adoption. Philip K Hitti writes:

Al-Khwarizmi, writing in the first half of the ninth century was the exponent of the use of numerals, including the zero, in preference to letters. These numerals he called Hindi, indicating their Indian origin. His work on the Hindu method of calculation was translated into Latin by Adelard of Bath in the twelfth century and as *De numero indico* has survived, whereas the Arabic original has been lost. (*History of the Arabs*, p. 573)

In ancient times Roman numerals were in vogue in Europe. In this system, letters were used to express numbers. The use of letters to express numbers was adopted by the Greeks and some other ancient nations, and later by the Romans, who used the seven letters – M, D, C, L, X, V, I in various combinations. For instance the figure 88 would be written as LXXXVIII. This was a cumbersome method and made calculation extremely difficult. The Europeans, however, regarded the Roman numerals as holy – a gift from the gods. As a result, they failed to revise their thinking in this matter. Regarding non-holy numerals as holy was the reason they failed to make any progress in science and mathematics for several hundred years. It was the Islamic revolution which for the first time broke the aura of sanctity surrounding the numeral and ushered in the era of scientific progress in Europe.

Leonardo of Pisa was the most distinguished mathematician of the Middle Ages. He helped introduce into mathematics the Hindu-Arabic numerals and the number sequence that bears his name.

Little is known about Leonardo's life beyond the few facts given in his mathematical writings. It is probable that he was born in Pisa, Italy. During Leonardo's boyhood, his father, Guglielmo, a Pisan merchant, was appointed consul, or chief magistrate, over the community of Pisan merchants in the North African port of Bugia (now Beja, Algeria). Leonardo soon joined him. With a view to future usefulness the father sent his son to study calculation with an Arab master. Leonardo later described his enjoyment in learning "the art of the nine Indian figures". Leonardo also travelled to Egypt, Syria, Greece, Sicily, and Provence, where he studied different numerical systems and methods of calculation but never found one as satisfactory as the Hindu-Arabic numerals.

When Leonardo's *Liber abaci* first appeared, Hindu-Arabic numerals were known to only a few European intellectuals through translation of the writings of the 9th century Arab mathematician and astronomer AlKhwarizmi. Leonardo began his explanation of the notation by observing: "The nine Indian figures are: 987654321. With these nine figures and with the sign O... any number may be written, as is demonstrated below." The first seven chapters dealt with the notation, explaining the principle of place value, by which the position of a figure determines whether it is a unit, ten, 100, and so forth, and demonstrating the use of the numerals in arithmetical operations. The techniques were then applied to such practical commercial problems as profit margin, barter, money changing, conversion of weights, partnerships, and interest.

The *Liber abaci*, which was widely copied and imitated, drew the attention of the Holy Roman emperor Frederick II, who was a patron of science. In the 1220s, Leonardo was invited to appear before the Emperor at Pisa and there he propounded a series of problems, three of which Leonardo presented in his books. The first two belonged to a favourite Arabic type ..."

(EB - 10/817 - 18)

Wilfrid Blunt writes:

"And supposing the tide of Islam had not been stemmed ? Nothing so delayed the advance of science in the West as the clumsiness of the Roman numerals. Had the Arabic numerals, which had reached Baghdad from India towards the end of the eight century, been soon afterwards introduced into and adopted by western Europe as a whole, much of that scientific progress which we associate with the Renaissance in Italy might have been achieved several centuries earlier.

Wilfrid Blunt, *The Times*, (London)

April 2, 1976.

## An Explanation

A book in English has been published by the Children's Book Trust, New Delhi, consisting of 22 pages, written for children and general readers, entitled *Story of Zero* by Dilip M. Salwi.

The book shows that the concept of zero originated in India. Before this invention there existed no simple method of representing large figures. According to one method, certain words were fixed for particular figures like Sahasara for 1000, Aayota for 10,000, Laksha for 10,00,00 Koti for 10,00,000. The invention of zero revolutionized the science of mathematics, for now it became extremely easy to denote large figures.

Brahma Gupta (598-660), born in Multan, was the first notable person to fix the method of zero. However his method had some shortcomings. Later on Bhaskar (1114-1185) born in Bijapur, wrote a book in Sanskrit called *Lailawati*, in which he described the zero concept in more simple and understandable terms.

Mr. R.K. Murthi reviewing this book in *The Times of India* (30 January, 1989) writes: "It boosts our sense of national pride to note that the zero was conceived of in India." (p. 6)

The writer of this book tells its Indian readers: "The Indian numbers first entered Spain, then Italy, France, England and Germany ... Indian numbers were accepted completely ... Their adoption turned out to be the turning point in the history of mathematics and science.

It is true that the concept of zero originated in India, but it is true that it reached the western world directly from India. It had rather reached the west through the Arabs. That is why the west calls these numerals Arabic rather than Indian .*The Encyclopedia Britannica* says:

Arabic numerals - the numbers, 0 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9; they may have originated in India, but were introduced to the western world from Arabia. (1/469)

At another place the EB tells us that these numbers reached the western intellectuals in the 9th century through the writings of the Arab mathematician, Al-Khwarizmi. He explained these numbers in Arabic and then his Arabic books reached Europe through Latin translations.

Bertrand Russell writes:

About 830, Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi, a translator of mathematical and astronomical books from the Sanskrit, published a book which was translated into Latin in the twelfth century, under the title *Algoritmi de numero Indrum*. It was from this book that the West first learnt of what we call 'Arabic' numerical, which ought to be called 'Indian'. The same author wrote a book on algebra which was used in the west as a text-book until the sixteenth century.

(p.416)

In spite of the fact that the concept of zero originated in India, for several hundred years it received no recognition in India itself. It came to be generally known in India only when first the Arabs and then the west adopted it. *The Encyclopedia Britannica* says: "The invention, probably by the Hindus, of the digit zero, has been described as one of the greatest importance in the history of mathematics. Hindu

literature gives evidence that the zero may have been known before the birth of Christ but no inscription has been found with such a symbol before the 9th century.”

(1/1115).

It is true then that the concept of zero had first formed in the mind of an Indian. But at that period in history, India was dominated wholly by polytheism and superstition. And consequently mysterious ideas had come to be associated with everything. Inventions were abhorred. That was why the concept of zero did not find general recognition in ancient India. It was reduced to a mere discovery by an individual, and thus failed to win general approval.

When Islam put an end to the concepts of polytheism and superstition, the concept of zero was welcomed as were so many other inventions.



## Avoiding retaliation for the sake of God

While the Muslims were returning from the Bani Mustalaq campaign, A'ishah was detained by the loss of a necklace. She found the necklace and, losing trace of the Muslim party, went to sleep at the place where they had put up camp the night before. There she was spotted by a Companion. He sat her on his camel and, himself holding the reins, set off for Medina. When they reached home, the hypocrites used this episode as an opportunity to spread false scandals about A'ishah: One of those engaged in this scandal-mongering was Mistah, a relative of Abu Bakr, who received a monthly stipend from his comparatively wealthy kinsman. When Abu Bakr discovered Mistah's role in the slander against his daughter A'ishah, he swore an oath that he would not give Mistah any money in future. Then this verse of the Quran was revealed: "Let not the honourable and rich among you swear not to give to their kindred, the poor, and those who have emigrated for the cause of God. Rather, let them pardon and forgive. Do you not wish God to forgive you? He is Forgiving, Merciful." (24:22) "Surely, I would like God to forgive me," said Abu Bakr, on hearing of the revelation of this verse.

(Seerat ibn Hisham)

## Propagation of Islam

In the 'Personal' column of the *Times of India* (13 Oct. 1990), the following declaration appeared:

I, Ashok Madan, aged 30, son of Shri A.L. Madan, resident of G-12/2, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi, have embraced Islam of my own free will, and will henceforth be known as Akhtar Madan. (C-59254)

This is neither a chance happening nor an isolated case. Occurrences of this nature are witnessed daily in this country and indeed allover the world. Hardly a day passes without someone or the other turning away from his or her inherited religion to enter the fold of Islam.

Can this phenomenon be attributed to the preaching of Muslims? It certainly can not. True *daw'ah* activity (taking the message of Islam to the people), a much-needed programme, is conspicuous by its absence. Scores of movements and programmes are being undertaken in the name of Islam, but they are not, in essence, *daw'ah*. There is hardly an individual or an organization which is prepared to undertake the noble task of carrying the message of Islam to the masses, and this, in spite of the Muslim population of the world being estimated to be one hundred million. Why then, in the face of such negligence, is Islam continuing to spread? The answer is that it does so on its own strength.

The consciousness of God and religion is inherent in human nature. Because of this inner urge, people go in quest of the religion of God. Since all other religions have been distorted by additions and alterations, these seekers can never be spiritually satisfied by them. As such when they study Islam, they feel from the bottom of their hearts, that this is what they have instinctively been seeking all along. This feature of Islam, that is, its having remained undistorted and free from all human interpolations, and its being an established religion from the historical point of view, is what has invested it with the power-to spread on its own, even when no organized effort is made to assist in its communication .

## The Divine Gift

The Prophet was addressed thus in the Quran: "We have sent you to the people of the world only as a divine blessing." When Abu Hurayrah said that the Prophet had been asked to curse the polytheists, he said, "I have not been sent to curse. I have been sent as a blessing."

There is a Hadith that the Messenger of God said, "I am God's blessing sent as a gift to His servants." According to another tradition, Abdullah Bin Umar reported that the Messenger of God said, "God has sent me as a blessing and a gift to the people with the rise of one community and the fall of another." (i.e. one community of believers will rise, while another community of unbelievers will fall)

The Prophet is an ideal for his followers. After him; his followers are his representatives. Now his followers shall have to be to the world what the Prophet was to the people of his time. The Prophet was a divine blessing and a gift from God to his own and other communities. Now his followers shall have to become the blessing and gift in his place. Unless his followers discharge this responsibility they have no right to call themselves his followers.

The followers of Muhammad, may peace be upon him, are there to give and not to demand from others. It is for others that the followers have to become a divine gift. Their lives should be rewarding for others and not a source of pain and misgivings.

For this purpose, the followers must have forbearance so that, inspite of being deprived, they still remain the givers. Notwithstanding the excesses committed against them, the followers must remain the well-wishers of others so that they avoid nursing the spirit of revenge. Without forbearance and patience, the followers can never be a divine gift for others in this world of trial. And unless the followers' become blessings for the others, the doors to divine favour will remain forever closed to them.

## Gulf Diary

### 3

#### 1st February, 1991

An acquaintance handed me an Urdu monthly magazine and asked me to read a commentary in it on American policy. It said that America's hard-line attitude and its ruthless policy of crushing the Muslims had turned Arab territory into a battle ground where Muslim blood ran like water, and that believers in the Trinity were openly intruding upon the legacy of Ibrahim. The Prophet had exhorted the faithful to 'expel the Jews and the Christians from the Arabian peninsula.' The Qur'an also says that they should not be befriended. Yet the Prophet's successors and followers have made them their allies, and the latter are now marauding everywhere in Arab territory. Muslim cities are being turned into Naga Sakis and Hiroshimas." (*Ma'arif*, February, 1991)

I thereupon showed him the Arabic weekly *al Dawah* (January 31, 1991) in which it has been ruled by Sheikh Ibn Baz, a well-known Islamic scholar of Saudi Arabia, who is president of Dar-al-Ifta, in- Riyadh, that according to the Islamic principle of *idhtirar*, that is, the law of necessity, it is quite permissible to seek help from non-Muslim governments. He promptly took umbrage at this saying that "those who say such things are on the Saudis' pay roll and are American agents."

This is the tone and tenor of Muslim 'writers' and 'orators'. They cannot tolerate any disagreement. In such an eventuality they immediately resort to fault-finding, apportioning blame and outright condemnation.

Those who advocate the expulsion of Jews and Christians from Islamic territory should be equally emphatic about expelling evil from their own hearts. It is obligatory for all Muslims to harbour no malice towards other Muslims. The true Muslim should be neither egoistic nor unjust. He should feel no ill-will towards others and should never act vengefully. He must never make baseless allegations leading to character assassination, and should never wish for the destruction of another.

But this other kind of expulsion – of base feelings and motives – does not interest Muslims. They have proved totally ineffective on this front, and yet they are the most vocal about the territorial expulsion of other human beings.

#### 2ad February, 1991

The *Times of India* of February 2, 1991 carried an article by Mr. Sham Lal, Win the War; Lose the Peace, I liked the heading better than the contents of the article.

In the two weeks of fighting in the Gulf, nearly 50 billion dollars have been spent. The expenditure will spiral upward every day. Irrespective of who wins the war, the peace has been lost. India won the war of Bangladesh in 1971. But what followed was violence, inflation and rampant corruption, destroying the peace and tranquility for ever.

The same story will be repeated, albeit on a much larger scale after the Gulf War. No matter which side is victorious, the misery of the common man will only increase a hundred fold. The impact will be felt even by the victor.

Regardless of the scale – small or big – on which wars are fought they are all fought to find a solution to some problem. But every war in turn has created even more problems. A noted western thinker has said: “Problems are created by problem-solving activity.”

There is, however, an exception to this rule – the course embarked upon by the prophet of Islam. Like other leaders he found himself in confrontational situations, but the difference in his case was that the number of times he actually chose to go to war was almost negligible. In the annals of human history his humanitarianism in solving problems has remained unparalleled.

He faced the kind of challenges which today result in war. But the Prophet used peace as his weapon. If the Muslims could only emulate their own Prophet, thus showing the world that peace is the strongest force, they would not only win their battles without a fight, but would also demonstrate the Divine way. In this way they would establish their leadership of the world.

### 3rd February, 1991

Not only the front pages of the newspapers but also additional inside pages are full of the happenings in the Gulf these days. *The Hindustan Times* of February 3, 1991 has devoted the whole of page 14 to this topic. But in the middle of all this tragic war reporting, there is a four-line news-item: A man convicted of killing ten Rochester area women in New York since 1988 has been sentenced to a minimum of 250 years in prison.

In terms of the general lay-out of the newspaper, this piece of news has been relegated to such an insignificant position that it would most likely attract little or no attention. But it is actually a very important piece of news. The punishment meted out for these heinous crimes is a measure of man's abhorrence of criminality. Such punishments are an expression of man's conscience.

Going by the dictates of conscience one would like to see the killer killed at least given a long and hard term in jail. This being so, what of those responsible for destructive wars that cost thousands of lives, cripple millions of others, wipe out irreplaceable natural resources and pollute the land, sea and atmosphere? What about the one who causes widespread death and destruction? Who will punish him? The inability to deal effectively with this situation because of human limitations necessitates the

emergence of another, world in which there is limitless power and authority. It is there that the war mongers will receive the punishment they deserve.

## 4th February, 1991

The Gulf war started on 17 January, 1991. Since then, bombing raids had been going on non-stop. But it was mostly a one-side affair. While allied bombers rained destruction on Iraq, Mr. Saddam Hussain and his army remained sheltered in their bunkers. Then, suddenly, on 30 January, 1991, the Iraqi army in a surprise move attacked Al Khafji, a border town of Saudi Arabia, and brought it under their control. The next two days witnessed fierce battles as the Allied Forces reacted with heavy land and air assaults. The Iraqi forces suffered a crushing defeat. A large number of their men were killed. Some were taken prisoner, while others fled, leaving behind their equipment.

The Americans and the Allied forces rated the Iraqi army very highly as a fighting force, and were of the view that it would not be easy to take it on. But the assault on Al Khafji revealed the chinks in the Iraqi armour, thus bearing out the opinion of an independent defence expert who had forecast that an attack by the Allied forces on Alkhafji would go against the Iraqis. As it happened, the Iraqi communications were found to be very poor and even in fighting skills they were found lacking. Most importantly, their hearts were not in fighting.

They were not as tough as we thought they were. A fresh report suggests that the Al Khafji episode has emboldened the Americans, who are planning a massive assault to destroy the Iraqi forces in Kuwait and Iraq. The myth of Iraqi invincibility has been exploded. It looks certain that the Iraqis will not be able to face the Allies even in a land battle. They were heading for a humiliating defeat.

Whether the confrontation is between two individuals or two nations, face plays an important role. If a man is not sure of winning, he should avoid fighting so that he does not lose face in the event of his defeat. Once this happens, he will no longer be held in awe.

## 5th February, 1991

*Al-Dawah*, a popular Arabic weekly of Riyadh has published an article on the Gulf War, entitled:

‘Foolishness Too is a Weapon’

According to this report, when an officer of the Allied Forces was asked what their most powerful weapon was, he replied, “The most powerful weapon of the Allied Forces is Saddam Hussain’s foolhardiness and blind rages. The Allies ought to take advantage of this if they want a quick victory.”

No man is a fool. But a great craving for something can make a man deaf and blind. Mr. Saddam Hussain’s real weakness is his boundless ambition to see himself as a great hero. This is why he rushes into doing things which are well beyond the scope of his actual powers.

After coming into power in 1979, he has committed one blunder after another. In September, 1980, he unilaterally revoked the Treaty of Aljazier (1975) and launched an attack on Iran. For eight years subsequently he waged a futile war. Then, suddenly, on 2nd August, 1990, he invaded Kuwait, thereby getting himself into a situation of such difficulty that he is unable to extricate himself from it. Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

Faith creates humility in a man and humility saves him from committing all kinds of blunders. A man of faith constitutes a power which cannot be overcome, even by the most dreaded enemy. Blunders are the result of overestimating one's own capacities. Faith keeps a man from such self-aggrandizement. As a result he is saved from committing acts of folly which lead to serious misadventures.

## 6th February, 1991

Long-range missiles were first used by the Germans in World War II. They were later 'improved' by the Americans and Soviets to make them more lethal and longer-ranged. Their systems are complicated and now have nuclear warheads mounted in them. A launcher is used to fire them and their direction is controlled by radio signals, sending them at great speed directly to the target.

The Soviets used German technology to make the Scud missiles, which were brought in large quantities by Iraq. The Iraqis carried out further modification to make them more lethal and to increase their range.

Mr. Saddam Hussain was very confident of getting good results with the Scud. He considered it a surprise weapon which he would use to hit the enemy hard. These missiles were used in the Gulf war on about 18 occasions to strike the Israeli cities of Haifa and Tel Aviv. The same number of missiles were launched against Dahrn and Riyadh in Saudi Arabia. But largely, they proved ineffective. They were intercepted and destroyed in mid-air by the Patriot missiles so that they could not even get within striking distance of their targets. As soon as the Americans learned that the Soviets had been able to produce Scud missiles, they began the research work which produced the Patriot – an effective counter to the Scud.

Immediately a Scud was fired the Patriot missile would leave its launcher, travel at an extremely fast speed to intercept it, and then it would explode it in mid-air. Of the several dozen Scuds fired by Iraq during the Gulf war, each one was rendered ineffective by American Patriot missiles.

The photograph below depicts both missiles in action. A Scud launched by the Iraqis is shown being intercepted in mid-flight by a Patriot missile.

The Patriot missile has a very advanced and complicated system, which includes a satellite in orbit and a control system on the ground. There is an inbuilt flaw in the Scud, and this is exploited by the Patriot missile system. The Americans have taken the maximum advantage of this weakness to destroy a large number of Scuds.

When a Scud is launched, very intense heat is given off. This emanation is picked up by the satellite and relayed to the ground station. This in turn activates the computers and the Patriot is then launched. As the Scud's flight progresses, the computer works out the path to be followed by the Patriots. The point of interception is so accurately anticipated that the Patriot cannot fail to destroy the Scud

Like the Scud, everything in this world has a weak point, and if you know what it is, you can make use of it to achieve success, whatever the odds. With this knowledge, you can defeat any adversary at his own game.

## 7th February, 1991

The *Hindustan Times* of 6th February has reproduced a statement made by the former Oil Minister of Saudi Arabia, Mr. Ahmed Zaki Yemani, in which he asserts that the Gulf war is because of oil. In an interview with a Swedish daily, *Svenska Dagbladet*, he said, "...in future, the power which has oil resources in its hands will be the superpower of the world". He went on to say that "because the Persian Gulf has 75 per cent of the entire oil resources of the world, US domination of the Gulf oil would mean it would be able to use it as an alternative to the atomic bomb in future international developments." (p. 12)

There is also a statement in today's paper by President George Bush, who claims that "... the Gulf War would be America's last war. There would be no need to fight another one because of the new world order." (p. 12)

In the early period of Islam the Muslims enjoyed immense political power, which earned them respect the world over. God was kind to them once again when oil deposits were discovered, giving them the potential of a superpower in the age of technology. It is ironical that their wealth is being exploited by others, who are becoming the superpower, while the Muslims themselves have to play a subordinate role.

If opportunities existing beyond the boundaries of one's own terrain are to be availed of, the first prerequisite is internal strength. Without this, external opportunities are as useless as a body without a soul. No internal strength means no achievement either at home or at the international level.

## 8th February, 1991

The *Qaumi Awaz* (February 8) and certain other dailies have published a report that Pakistan's polity is faced with a serious crisis, arising from the government's support for Saudi Arabia, while public sympathy is with Iraq. The Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, declared the 5th of January, 1991, as Kashmir day, solely in order to divert public attention from the Gulf war. But despite the full backing of the government, the whole performance was a lacklustre affair.

A similar situation has developed in the Arab world, where the Muslims are divided into two camps. A select group is with Saudi Arabia and America, but the majority seem overwhelmingly to support



Mr. Saddam Hussain. This reflects poorly on the Muslim leadership which has based its judgement on emotions rather than on reality.

The Palestinian problem that arose after the second World War was indeed serious, and warranted a balanced approach. Yet, realities were ignored, and the case was put before the people with rhetoric verging on bombast. In the last 50 years, if the Muslim masses have become deeply emotional on the Palestine issue, it is because they have been fed consistently on emotion.

Mr. Saddam Hussain took undue advantage of this fact, demanding that the Americans and their Allies should have Palestine vacated before he would withdraw from Kuwait. He made this into a catchy slogan which he knew would be certain to appeal to Muslims who had developed an emotional mentality as a result of the highly charged presentation of the Palestine issue. As he anticipated, they were completely taken in by it.

If politics are to be constructive, they should not play upon the sentiments of the people. Whenever an issue is sentimentalized to a very high degree, people will fail to appreciate the true seriousness of the situation. Any judgement they make on it is bound to be over-precipitate because it is coloured by their emotions. Rather than play such a role, politics should inculcate in people a just sense of proportion.

## 9th February, 1991

Dr. Abdur Rehman Al-Awzi, a minister in the Kuwait government has come to New Delhi as a special envoy of the ruler of Kuwait in order to meet senior officials of the Government of India. On February 8, 1991, he held a press conference, details of which have been published by various dailies.

Dr. Al-Awzi admitted that the Muslim world is wholeheartedly supporting Mr. Saddam Hussain and that America is being condemned as an oppressor. This is because of the different ways of looking at the problem. He said that the Gulf War did not start on January 17, 1991, but on August 2, 1990 when Iraq forcibly occupied Kuwait. (*Qaumi Awaz*, February 9, 1991).

What the Kuwaiti Minister was trying to convey was that as far as Kuwait is concerned, the war was started by Mr. Saddam Hussain, whom they consider the invader, whereas the Muslim masses think the war was started on January 17, 1991, by the Americans, the latter according to them, being the guilty party.

When I read this, I felt that this relates not only to the Gulf War, but to all such controversial matters. Just as every dispute starts with some action, followed by a reaction, so does every dispute have two sides to it. But it will depend upon individuals which side you will hear. No one is ever willing to tell the whole story. Each of the involved parties will highlight those aspects that are in his own favour.

This point is fully illustrated by the different stances adopted on the events of August 2 and January 17. Those who believe that the real war started on August 2 fault the other party, which considers January 17 as the commencement of the onslaught, and vice versa. Be that as it may, from the Islamic standpoint,

the blame goes to the party which struck on August 2, because the one who commences hostilities is the greater oppressor.

## 10th February, 1991

The Pakistani Premier, Mian Nawaz Sharif, visited several Muslim countries on a peace mission in the last week of January. The countries he covered were Iran, Turkey, Syria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. His sole aim in meeting these countries' leaders was to put an end to the war. *The Times of India* (February 10) reports that he is on his second peace mission tour. He is scheduled to visit Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Libya. He has already met the Iraqi Ambassador to Pakistan, Ismael Hamudi Husain, on several occasions. He has also tried to reach Saddam Hussain through King Hussain of Jordan.

*Nawa-e-Waqt*, a Pakistani daily, (2 Feb. 91) reports that Mr. Nawaz Sharif met with the various political parties and religious leaders to discuss the situation in the Gulf and also apprised them of his peace initiative. He said, 'I have asked Mr. Saddam Hussain for just three words: "I will withdraw." The rest can be handled with ease.'

This is a very simplistic view of the situation taken by Mr. Nawaz Sharif. It is not just a question of saying 'I will withdraw', but rather of saying 'I was wrong'.

Unfortunately, there is hardly anyone in the world who has the courage to admit that he was wrong, including Pakistani Islamist leaders.

It is not easy to say, 'I was wrong.' For acknowledging one's error amounts to a denial of what one stands for. In fact, saying, 'I was wrong' takes great courage. Very few people have it.

Once a step has been taken, or a statement has been made, its rectitude becomes a prestige issue. No one wants to retrace his steps, or admit a fault, thereby losing face. It is this fear of losing face which prevents a man from taking the corrective step. He would rather let the world totter to the brink of ruin than allow his false sense of prestige to suffer.

## 11th February, 1991

When Mr. Saddam Hussain, the ruler of Iraq, invaded Iran in 1980" his battle-cry was 'The road to \*Quds passes through Tehran.' But when, after eight long years, the fighting ceased, Quds was still under Israeli occupation, while the end result for the two Muslim countries was the loss of lakhs of people and billions of rupees.

\* *Al Bait-al-Maqaddas*, the mosque third in importance located in Palestine The first two being the Kabah and Masjid an-Nabi.

In his second misadventure, Mr. Saddam Hussam overran Kuwait. The latter, being a small country, could not defend itself. Again, Mr. Saddam Hussain's battle cry was "The road to Quds passes through Kuwait."

On both occasions, the Muslims of the world, in an overwhelming response to these flights of rhetoric, extended full support to Mr. Saddam Hussain, in the belief that he was sincere about entering Jerusalem to liberate Baitul Maqdis (Quds). They never stopped to wonder why Iraq could not have marched directly on Jerusalem, without first making a detour to overrun Tehran.

The biggest problem for Muslims today is their state of unawareness. If they had been fully apprized of all the facts, they would never have supported Saddam Hussain in his ruthless invasion, and he could never have counted on their future support.

It is this lack of awareness which prevents their understanding the motives' behind any given utterance or deed. They do not think to probe deeper. They just scratch the surface and think they have found the truth. They are keenly aware of their own emotions, but numb to the happenings in the outside world. They can hardly distinguish between the real and the unreal. Who can save such people from the degeneration which surely awaits them?

True wisdom lies in knowing how to distinguish between fact and fabrication.

## 12th February, 1991

*Al-Majalla*, an Arabic weekly printed in Jeddah and published in London, carried in its issue of February 12 an interview with Dr. Abur Rahman Al Awzi, a minister in the government of Kuwait, on the subject of the Gulf crisis.

The interviewer asked Dr. Al-Awzi what the future foreign policy of Kuwait would be. Dr. Al Awzi's reply was, in essence, that Kuwait must learn from its past experiences and benefit from them. He also said that their biggest mistake was to have given their trust to a man who was not worthy of it.

Kuwait had considered Mr. Saddam as another Arab brother and had given him billions of dollars worth of aid. With this Mr. Saddam Hussain proceeded to acquire arms, and became powerful enough to attack his benefactor. He is, therefore, no longer considered trustworthy by the Kuwaitis.

Strangely, while this was happening, the Muslims were deeply impressed by the speeches of Mr. Saddam Hussain to the point of having blind faith in him. They considered him a supporter of their cause and their deliverer. In fact, the Muslims are now making the same mistakes as were committed by the Kuwaiti rulers in the past, i.e. they are taking him at his face value, instead of judging him by his conduct. Imam Malik records Qasim Bin Muhammad Tabii as having said:

"I have seen people (i.e. the Prophet's companions) who attached no importance to mere utterances. In actual fact, what counts is not a man's words but his deeds."

What a difference between the way the companions thought and the way Muslims think nowadays.